

# **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization**

## **Light Rail Transit Resource Guide**

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## **CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION**

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
330 Humphrey Center**

# **Light Rail Transit Resource Guide**

Conducted on behalf of  
Longfellow Community Council

Prepared by  
Verónica Méndez, Undergraduate Research Assistant,  
University of Minnesota  
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# Light Rail Transit Resource Guide



Prepared by: Veronica Mendez, Student Intern from the University of Minnesota at Longfellow Community Council

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Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization  
330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center  
301-19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

phone: 612/625-1020

e-mail: [npcr@freenet.msp.mn.us](mailto:npcr@freenet.msp.mn.us)

website: <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr>

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Jim Anderson, Mendota Mdwakanton Dakota Community

Jim Barton, Met Council

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Sishir Chang, Research Fellow University of MN

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Sheila Delaney, LCC

John Dillery, Metro Transit

Gary Erickson, Hennepin County Transit and Community Works

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John Garry, Corcoran Neighborhood Organization

Eric Guida, Seward Neighborhood Group

Jim Hafner, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Dan Keiser, Bur Oaks Trees, MN liscensed Tree Inspector

Kurt Kimber, SENA

Larry Hiscock, LCC

John Knudsen, Hennepin County Public Affairs

Jennifer Lovaasen, Met Council

Karen Lyons, Met Council

Monique MacKenzie, City of Minneapolis Planning Department

Mary McFarland, Mn/DOT

Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Commissioner

Dean Michalko, Hennepin County Transit and Community Works

Steve Morris, Metro Transit

Kris Nelson, CURA at the University of MN

Lonnie Nichols, Phillips ETC

Hillary Olson, LCC

Mike Schadauer, Mn/DOT

Vanessa Steele, CURA at the University of MN

Val Svensson, Mn/DOT

Chip Welling, Mn Department of Natural Resources

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## Executive Summary

This guide contains information about LRT as well as how citizens can be involved in the planning process. The purpose of the guide is not to persuade people or influence their opinions, but simply to help them understand the processes involved so they can make informed, educated decisions. It must be noted however, that this packet may not be completely thorough. Much of the information was obtained from government and city officials. Due to time constraints in doing the research, there are some opposing views which may not be represented here.

### Commonly Asked Questions

This packet contains a list of sixty-one questions that were asked by residents in the neighborhoods along the Light Rail Transit route. There were several themes that emerged from the questions that residents had. One theme was general information about the operation of LRT. Its cost will be comparable to the cost for the bus (\$1.50 during peak hours and \$1.00 off peak). Transfers that are currently used on buses will be interchangeable with Light Rail transfers. Trains will run about every 30 minutes in the early morning and late night, every 15 minutes in the early evening, every 10 minutes during mid-day and weekends, and every 7.5 minutes during peak hours. They will run from about 4:30am-12:30am everyday. Finally, it should take about 30 minutes to get from downtown to the airport.

Another major resident concern was the cost of the project and how it would be funded. The current estimate on total cost is \$548 million. This cost is expected to be split by the Federal Transit Administration, the state of Minnesota, Hennepin County, MAC, and HCRRA. It will cost about \$9.9 million per year to operate which is expected to be paid for by passenger fares and money allocated by the legislature.

According to several of the agencies involved in planning and construction, there are several goals LRT is expected to achieve as well as benefits. The main goals are to relieve traffic congestion, increase transit ridership, provide better service that is clean and safe, reduce bus and car pollution, channel private investment and growth by increasing tourism along the corridor, to provide choices to people who are currently only have the option to drive in cars, to provide a nice system so people will want to ride it, and to get rid of dependence on foreign oil, as LRT is electrically operated. In addition, this quick and comfortable public transportation will provide people with easier access to the destinations that LRT travels to. In other cities, new land uses around LRT corridors have actually revitalized the neighborhoods. With good planning this could also happen here.

Citizens have expressed concern over how they can be involved in the planning process. This is very important in creating change that is in people's best interest. There are several opportunities for citizens to influence the LRT project. Some ways to do this include contacting members of the Community Advisory Committee for

the LRT, or members of the City Council to give input and suggestions. More information about participation in the planning process can be obtained from neighborhood associations. Phone numbers for all of these representatives can be found below. Also included here are contact names and telephone numbers from offices at Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), and Metro Transit. These offices can be contacted for questions or comments about LRT.

### Introduction to Land Use Planning

Land use planning is an important tool that allows residents to design their communities in ways that suit their needs and desires. The introduction of LRT to the neighborhood presents the opportunity to greatly reshape and develop the communities around it. Neighborhood residents can and should be involved in this process. The more people that are involved, the more representative of resident's desires the plan is likely to be.

Creating a plan begins with observation of physical and social aspects of the neighborhood. Once this information is collected, different issues can be identified. People can decide what problems exist, and what could be made better. Next, goals should be set to deal with these issues. Following this step would be coming up with strategies to achieve these goals. Finally, the plan is presented to city planners. Although all parts of the plan will not necessarily be used, at least planners can get an idea of what residents want.

In addition to this possibility for land use planning, there will be workshops held for residents to get involved in the process. For information about this contact, residents should contact their neighborhood associations.

### Transit Oriented Development

In planning for land use, it may be important to consider transit oriented development. There are three main components to this type of development. One is to create high density development near station stops, so that many significant destinations are all located within walking distance of public transit. The second is to have a variety of land uses. For example, having retail, professional services and housing all near a station stop. The third component to transit oriented development is to design the area to be pedestrian friendly. This may mean having store fronts on the sidewalk instead of placing them so that pedestrians have to walk through a parking lot in order to enter the store. If these three components are implemented in developing the area, increased use of transit will be more likely.



## Introduction

This packet contains information about Light Rail Transit. It includes answers to many commonly asked questions, a list of acronyms and definitions of terms that are often used in talking about LRT, an introduction to land use planning and the process involved, examples and descriptions of transit oriented development, and a list of contact names and phone numbers for further questions.

The information was gathered through literature and internet research as well as interviews with several key decision makers and other interested parties. The questions were collected from residents of all the neighborhoods along the Light Rail Transit route through the neighborhood organizations in these communities. These organizations are Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc., Phillips Environmental and Transportation committee, Seward Neighborhood Group, Corcoran Neighborhood Organization, Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association, Nokomis East Neighborhood Association, and Longfellow Community Council.

Once the questions were collected, they were distributed to several people knowledgeable about LRT to be answered. Land use planning information was gathered from books, and information about Transit Oriented Development came from several people who specialize in this area.

The purpose of these materials is to inform citizens about LRT issues and how they can be involved in the planning process. The purpose is not to persuade people or influence their opinions, but simply to help them understand the processes involved so they can make informed, educated decisions. It must be noted however, that this packet may not be completely thorough. Much of the information was obtained from government and city officials. Due to time constraints in doing the research, there are some opposing views which may not be represented here.

## Overview of the Project

The Light Rail Transit is a passenger train that runs along continuously welded tracks. It is powered by an overhead electrical system. The tracks will run from Downtown Minneapolis at Nicollet Mall to the Mall of America. The stops are at Nicollet Mall, Government Center, Metrodome, Cedar/Riverside, E. Franklin, E. Lake St., E. 38th St., E. 46th St., Minnehaha Park, VA Medical Center, Ft. Snelling, Airport, HHH Terminal, Bloomington So., and Mall of America. The estimated cost of the project at this time is \$548 million. The construction for the project is expected to start in the fall of 2000 and the line should be fully completed and operational by the end of 2004.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) presents the possibility for a great deal of change in the communities surrounding its corridor. It is very important for residents to participate in the planning process so that they can create change that is in their best interest. There are several opportunities for citizens to influence the LRT project. Some ways to do this include contacting members of the Community Advisory Committee for the LRT to give input and suggestions. City Council members can also be contacted. More information about participation in the planning process can be obtained from neighborhood associations. Phone numbers for all of these representatives can be found below.

## Commonly Asked Questions

Below are questions that were asked by residents in all of the neighborhoods along the Light Rail Transit route. These questions were collected from all the corresponding neighborhood organizations. They were then distributed to several people knowledgeable about LRT to be answered.

**1Q. Will the LRT be positive or negative for the business district on Lake Street?**

**Answer:** Studies in Portland and San Diego found that residential and commercial property within 1/4 to 1/2 mi. distance from the stations had an increase in lease rates and property values. This suggests that the businesses in the area must be doing well. If this can be translated to Lake St., then the businesses should do well.

**2Q. Will local businesses be located on maps or by other means at the station?**

**Answer:** This has been done in other cities, but it is not certain if it will be done here. There will be kiosks at the stations that show maps of the area around them. However, they probably will not be extremely descriptive like a map of stores at a mall. Resident's ideas on this can be heard at station planning meetings. Contact your neighborhood association for times and locations.

**3Q. What amenities will there be at the stations?**

**Answer:** This has not been decided. Market research is being done by Mn/DOT and Met Council to find out what things residents and people who work around the corridor want at the stations.

**4Q. How much will the entire project cost?**

**Answer:** The current estimate is \$548.

**5Q. Who funds it?**

**Answer:** Currently, about one half of the cost is expected from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). A request has been made to them for this money and the results should be known in May of 2000. In addition, \$100 million will come from the state of Minnesota, \$70 million from Hennepin County, \$70 million from the Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC), and Hennepin County and the state of Minnesota are contributing \$34 million worth of Right of Way (R/W). This comes from R/W that HCRRA and Mn/DOT have purchased in the past.

**6Q. How much will it cost to operate?**

**Answer:** About \$9.9 million per year

**7Q. How will the operation be funded?**

**Answer:** 40% is expected from passenger fares, the rest will be allocated by the legislature.

**8Q. How much money will be spent on public art?**

**Answer:** As of July 1999 \$450,000 was designated to be spent on public art. \$25,000 on each of the 14 non-airport stations and \$100,000 on the airport station.

**9Q. Are city taxes going to pay for LRT construction and operation?**

**Answer:** Yes

**10Q. Will there be a tax increase to pay for LRT construction and operation?**

**Answer:** No

**11Q. Do property values usually go up or down within a certain distance from LRT's?**

**Answer:** General studies have shown that LRT stations in neighborhoods tend to bring increases in property values and higher lease rates. A study in Portland showed that residential property value increased about 15%, and commercial property increased in lease rates about 5-25%.

**12Q. Will there be property tax adjustments if property value goes down around the stations?**

**Answer:** Yes. However, these adjustments may not be made annually. It may be two or three years before an area is re-examined.

**13Q. Will LRT be noisy?**

**Answer:** It is said to be quieter than street traffic because it is electrically powered and it runs along a continuous track unlike railroad tracks. This means that the LRT will not make the clicking noise that trains usually make when running over the seams in the tracks.

**14Q. Would the communities surrounding LRT routes receive compensation for the disturbances the train causes like sound proof windows, etc. like people living near the airport have?**

**Answer:** No. Since the LRT does not make nearly as much noise as airplanes and should not cause such disturbances.

**15Q. What will land use be like around the stations?**

**Answer:** This has not been decided yet. Citizens will have a say in the decision making process for land use. Workshops will be held for citizens to create plans for land use around stations. For information on these workshops and other opportunities call your neighborhood association.

**16Q. Will houses be torn down for high density apartments?**

**Answer:** No, houses will not be torn down. High density apartments may be built on land that not currently used or that is purchased later.

**17Q. Will the trains produce vibrations?**

**Answer:** There may be some vibrations but they will be less than maximum levels allowed for ground-borne vibrations.

**18Q. Will it reduce pollution?**

**Answer:** Some other cities have found environmental benefits to However, some suggest that it will make little difference. The largest reduction in pollution would be seen if less cars were on the road because people were taking the LRT or buses instead. Whether or not this will happen will be seen once LRT is operational.

**19Q. Will the train run on the ground or above ground?**

**Answer:** It will run on the ground except for an overpass over Lake St., one at 28th St., an under pass at Minnehaha park, and an underground station at the airport.

**20Q. What will the trains look like?**

**Answer:** There are pictures included in this packet of LRT vehicles in other cities. The appearance of trains here will be similar. Because LRT is electrically powered, there will be overhead power wires which when possible will be extended from the traffic signals so that they are not too intrusive or ugly. Otherwise there will be poles alongside the rails that support the wires.

**21Q. What will the stations look like?**

**Answer:** Station designs are not completed yet. They will probably be about 180ft. long, long enough for a train with two cars to stop in. They will either be climate-controlled shelters, or at least have complete weather protection from rain, snow, wind, etc. They will be similar to a large bus shelter, but with overhead heaters. Artistic design will also occur, but there are no specific details yet. Citizens will be involved in the design process. At the GSA, E. 46th St., E. 38th St. stations there will be concrete bus loops right next to stations for feeder buses. For information about the meetings for citizens to help design stations, contact your neighborhood group.

**22Q. How big will the cars be?**

**Answer:** Each train will probably have two cars about 90ft. long with room for 72 seats and room for 95 standing passengers

**23Q. Will the stations be safe, warm, well lit?**

**Answer:** There will be Metro Transit Police to provide security at the stations and also on the trains. There will also be emergency phones at stations. A safe level of lighting will also be provided. Also, stations will either be enclosed and climate-controlled (will have heat), or they will at least have complete weather protection. This means they will have shelter to protect from rain, snow, wind, etc. and overhead heaters.



**24Q. Why not just have more buses instead of LRT?**

**Answer:** Because in most cities experiences rail systems have a track record of attracting more riders per hour of service than buses. LRT also has better reliability in any weather than buses. Also, LRT has the capacity to carry more passengers than buses. In order to carry as many passengers on a bus as can be carried on LRT, more drivers are needed which increases costs.

**25Q. How long will the construction go on in each area where construction occurs?**

**Answer:** This is not exactly planned yet, but construction from Ft. Snelling to Downtown will occur from fall of 2000 until summer of 2003. Construction from Ft. Snelling to the Mall of America will begin in fall of 2000 and be completed at the end of 2004. However, construction will not go on throughout the entire areas for the full 3 or 4 years. Specific times when construction will go on at specific areas has yet to be determined.

**26Q. Have they done all the necessary consultation and contracting so that when they start building they won't run into any delays to getting the project done?**

**Answer:** No. Request proposals for a design and build project (D/B) are still being made. However, if this project is initiated the construction will be quicker. (See Glossary below for D/B)

**27Q. Won't the LRT cause parking problems along the side streets than run along the corridor?**

**Answer:** This is possible. In order to keep the side streets from turning into unofficial park and rides, citizens can declare the area a critical parking area which would allow only those with permits to park on the street. This would require a petition to the City of Minneapolis signed by 75% of the people that would be affected. However, people must pay for the permits. The current annual fee is \$10. To start this process call (612) 673-2411. There are also a few other possibilities. If people have other ideas of how to solve this problem they can submit their ideas to the members of the city council whose phone numbers are listed below.

**28Q. What measures will be taken to ensure safety for kids playing near the tracks?**

**Answer:** There will be fences all along the route and gate arms that come down to warn people, as well as cars, that the train is coming.

**29Q. Will it benefit the neighborhood? How?**

**Answer:** By providing quick and comfortable public transportation LRT will benefit the residents of neighborhoods by providing them with easier access to the destinations that LRT travels to. There will also be increased bus service connecting neighborhoods which will provide even more access to different areas for residents. Studies in other cities with LRT have shown that new land uses around LRT corridors have revitalized the neighborhoods. With good planning this could also happen here. Some Mn/DOT representatives say that LRT will decrease congestion on main roads which will keep commuters from driving through residential neighborhoods as a short-cut through traffic. This would reduce noise and traffic

through residential neighborhoods. It has also been said that LRT may draw people into other parts of the city to shop besides Downtown and the Mall of America because it will make access to these other shopping areas better.

**30Q. Will the LRT bring an increase of outsiders in the neighborhood?**

**Answer:** A representative from Metro Transit believes that it will. People will have more access to different neighborhoods as a result of LRT. This is not only because the LRT itself will bring people into different communities but also because there will be increased bus service from neighborhood to neighborhood meant to bring people to LRT stations. This increase in bus service will not only bring people to the LRT stations but also allow them better access to the different neighborhoods.

**31Q. What are the main goals of the LRT?**

**Answer:** According to several of the agencies involved in planning and constructing LRT, the goals are to relieve traffic congestion, increase transit ridership, to provide better service that is clean and safe, reduce bus and car pollution, channel private investment and growth by increasing tourism, provide choices to people who are currently forced to drive in cars, to provide a nice system so people will want to ride it, and to get rid of dependence on foreign oil, as LRT is electrically operated.

**32Q. Will LRT really service the communities it stops in?**

**Answer:** Much of this will depend on whether citizens participate in the planning process. If they do, then they can influence the affects LRT will have on their communities. If they do not, then LRT will be constructed as the agencies involved plan it, and it could conflict with how citizens want it. The best way to ensure that LRT really serves your community well is by being a part of the planning process. Contact your neighborhood group to see how you can be involved.

**33Q. Will it go right to the airport terminal or to a side station where you have to take a shuttle to the airport?**

**Answer:** LRT will not go straight to terminals. The airport station will be underground at the far end of the new parking lot. People will get off here and have to take an escalator up 2 or 3 floors. From here people can take a "people mover," which is an automated train, to the airport terminals.

**34Q. Will there be a space for luggage on the train?**

**Answer:** There will be nothing like a luggage rack on the train. There will be, however, a lot of floor space on each train so that if the train is not too busy there should be room on the floor to set luggage.

**35Q. Do the trains stop at traffic lights just like regular traffic?**

**Answer:** In Downtown Minneapolis LRT will stop at lights just like all other traffic. Once outside of downtown, however, LRT trains will have priority. They will not have to stop at lights. One possible exception may be at LRT's intersection with I494. It may not have priority at this intersection, so it would be subject to traffic lights just like all other traffic.

**36Q. Can bicycles be taken on the trains?**

**Answer:** Yes, but there may be restrictions as to how many can be on a train. Regulations about this will have not yet been determined.

**37Q. Can the community have a voice in any of the decisions made about the LRT?**

**Answer:** Yes. Citizens can attend neighborhood planning meetings. At these meetings they can help set the agenda of what the neighborhood group will work on. There will also be specific workshops for citizens to give input on station design, land use planning around the stations, public art, and a theme for the line. "Visioning sessions" will be like pre-workshops which take place in each neighborhood to discuss the station and station area within that community. Then, people from these pre-workshops will take the information presented there to the workshop where people from all neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor will meet together. There will be three of these meetings. Feedback from all of these workshops and pre-workshops will be used to make preliminary plans which will then be shown to communities to see if they still reflect their desires. To find out the dates and locations of the public workshops, pre-workshops, as well as the neighborhood planning meetings contact your neighborhood group.

**38Q. What opportunities do people have to design the stations?**

**Answer:** There will be station design workshops held for each station along the line. The workshops are intended to get residents from each of these neighborhoods to give their input on what they want the stations to look like. Resident input will then be considered when building the stations. To get more information on the workshops or to find out the date and time for the one in your neighborhood call your neighborhood group.

**39Q. Will there be circulator buses to get people to the stations?**

**Answer:** The city bus routes that now run near the corridor will be re-designed to make connections to LRT easier. Also, there will be new bus routes in the crosstown area, south of Nokomis.

**40Q. How much will it cost to ride?**

**Answer:** It will cost the same as the city bus. \$1.50 during peak hours and \$1.00 during non-peak.

**41Q. Will people be able to use bus transfers to ride?**

**Answer:** Yes. Bus transfers and Light Rail transfers will be interchangeable.

**42Q. Will it be handicap accessible?**

**Answer:** Yes. A ramp meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act will be located at the end of each platform. There will also be ramps and elevators at certain stations. In addition, train cars will be low floor cars which means that they are at same level as the station platform so passengers don't have to step up to get on the train.

**43Q. Will there be park and ride lots?**

**Answer:** Yes. There will be one at the GSA station with room for 600 cars.

**44Q. Where will the stops be?**

**Answer:** The stops will be at Nicolet Mall/Marquette, Government Center, Metrodome, Cedar/Riverside, Franklin Av., Lake Street, 38th, 46th, Minnehaha Park, Veteran Administration Hospital, GSA building at Fort Snelling, the Airport, the Humphrey Terminal, Bloomington So., and the Mall of America.

**45Q. Will it connect to other rail lines?**

**Answer:** Two other rail lines are in the process of being developed. One is the Northstar Transitway Corridor which will be 70 miles long running from Downtown Minneapolis to St. Cloud along Highway 10. The other is the Riverview Transitway Corridor which will be 9.5 miles long running from Lower East St. Paul through Downtown St. Paul and Southwest to the airport. There will also probably be others.

**46Q. How often will the trains run?**

**Answer:** The trains will run every 30 minutes in the early morning and late night, every 15 minutes in the early evening, every 10 minutes during mid-day and weekends, and every 7.5 minutes during peak hours.

**47Q. How will this affect bike trails?**

**Answer:** The LRT won't destroy any bike trails. The bike trail that parallels Hiawatha will remain intact. One will be added between 28th St. and 11th Ave. This will include a bridge over Franklin and 35W. There will also be a trail from Mendota bridge to Minnehaha park to Downtown Minneapolis. There is also a bike trail parallel to LRT route on Minnehaha Av.

**48Q. How fast does the Light Rail Transit go?**

**Answer:** The average speed is 22mph, but in some areas outside the city it can go up to 55 mph. Between Downtown and the Lake St. Station the speed limit will be 25 mph. Within Downtown it will have the same speed as traffic. It will take approximately 30 minutes to get from Downtown to the Airport.

**49Q. How long will the trains stop at each station?**

**Answer:** Approximately 20 seconds

**50Q. What hours will the train run?**

**Answer:** It will run from about 4:30am-12:30am everyday

**51Q. Will the line take up extra lane space on Hiawatha?**

**Answer:** No. It will run next to Hiawatha and cross above it in some places.

**52Q. What does this have to do with the Highway 55 reroute?**

**Answer:** LRT will be constructed down the existing Highway 55 corridor, and Highway 55 will then be rerouted for traffic.

**53Q. If there were no LRT would Highway 55 still be rerouted?**

**Answer:** Yes. Whether or not LRT is constructed, some sort of mass transit is expected to be put along this corridor. Whether the mass transit system on this corridor is LRT or something else, Highway 55 will still be rerouted around it.

**54Q. Will roads be rerouted because of the construction?**

**Answer:** The only road that will be permanently rerouted is Highway 55. There will, however, be detours during construction.

**55Q. Will the LRT create a barrier between neighborhoods and Minnehaha Park?**

**Answer:** This is subject to opinion. Adding tracks to the street will add distance to crossing from neighborhoods to the park. However, some Mn/DOT officials say that LRT really will not be a barrier because the tracks are embedded in the ground so they are not a visual barrier. Also, if residents get involved in planning the stations they can be built to fit into their surroundings so they won't seem to be a barrier.

**56Q. Is sacred Native land being disturbed by the construction?**

**Answer:** There is much disagreement on this issue. The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, which is made up of the tribal chairs of eleven federally recognized tribes, is responsible for deciding if the area is sacred. This agency said that there was no substantial evidence that any sacred sites were within the project area of the construction of the reroute of Highway 55. However, Native elders from various Native communities have validated the authenticity of this site. Experts from 3 or 4 nations also said it was a sacred site. They claim that a sacred prayer site exists there which is defined by 4 ancient oaks trees one in each direction North, South, East, and West. There are 4 ancient oaks that are only two degrees off of being perfectly North, South, East, and West.

**57Q. Is Minnehaha Park smaller now because of construction? What will it look like after construction is finished?**

**Answer:** Mn/DOT acquired 6.9 acres of Minneapolis park land for the project but will return 9.2 acres of land to the park. So, technically the park will be bigger. However, it has been said that the land that citizens see and consider to be the entire park right now, will be smaller.

**58Q. Will the tunnel at Minnehaha Parkway cause hazardous wastes to be transported through the neighborhood?**

**Answer:** It will not cause hazardous waste to be transported through the neighborhood. It will be allowed to carry hazardous waste through the tunnel just as it is allowed on HWY 55 now. The laws will remain the same. If it is spilled, material do exist than can clean it up. Also, Mn/DOT construction planners say that the tunnel will probably handle this waste better without absorbing it because special



precautions have been taken on the tunnel to make sure hazardous waste does not seep into the ground.

**59Q. How many trees will be cut down?**

**Answer:** According to Mn/DOT, 137 "notable" trees will be removed. 130 trees that were going to be cut down in the area have been protected and will not be cut down. About one year after construction of LRT is completed landscaping will be done which will replace all the "notable" trees that have been removed. (Whether or not a tree is considered notable is based on the importance of the species, its visual quality, and the potential use of the wood product.) No further information is available as to exactly how many total trees have been cut down, but some estimate several hundreds.

**60Q. How will it affect the creek? Water flow to the creek?**

**Answer:** According to Mn/DOT as well as Minnehaha Creek Watershed District there will be no long term negative impacts to the creek. During construction, the creek will be impacted because of the new bridge at Minnehaha Parkway. Water in the creek is being constricted into a narrow channel in order to move the water out of the way so that construction can proceed. This constriction is temporary and the creek should be restored after construction is done. Although they say that there will be no permanent impact upstream of the bridge, they say that water level further downstream will be lowered. Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is monitoring construction in an attempt to make sure there are no negative impacts, and that they can try to repair them if they occur.

**61Q. Will the bedrock be disturbed by sewer, road, LRT construction?**

**Answer:** According to Mn/DOT, no. The construction that will take place only requires digging up to 2 or 3 feet, so it will not affect bedrock. In areas where there are bridges, digging will be a little deeper but still will not affect bedrock. Previously, there were some concerns that construction would disturb the bedrock which contains an aquitard. This is where the water flow to the spring comes from. If this area were disturbed, some of the flow could be cut off. After complaints to Mn/DOT about this, a different method of construction was chosen to proceed. Mn/DOT says they can restore the flow of the spring if it is disturbed. However, they will restore it by pumping city water through it and not by restoring the natural flow.

## Glossary of Terms and Definitions

**At Grade/Above Grade** - At Grade means that the train will run along the ground. Above grade means it will be elevated above the street and it won't intersect with other traffic.

**Continuously Welded Tracks** - This means that the tracks that the train rides on are completely connected all the way down the line. There are no points where there are spaces along the track like regular train tracks. This means that there is much less noise because you don't hear the sound of the train going over the spaces like you can with regular trains.

**Feeder Buses** - These are Metro Transit (regular city buses) buslines that will be rerouted, as well as created, that go into the Light Rail Transit station to connect people from the bus to the train.

**Fly Over** - The bridge over Hiawatha Ave. at 28th St. when the LRT crosses from the east side of the street to the west side.

**Fully Developed Area** - An area in which all, or almost all, land has an assigned and established use. This includes land that is already built upon, or land that has been designated as a park, wetland, etc. The Twin cities is considered a fully developed area.

**Ground-Borne Noise Impact Regulation** - This is a regulation of the level of the strength that any vibrations can legally have. The Light Rail vibrations will not exceed this level.

**High Density Development** - The creation of a lot of new services, businesses, homes, etc. in the same area. This means lots of development in a small area.

**Kiss and Rides** - These are areas on the street outside the certain stations stops designated for people to pull into and drop people off to use Light Rail Transit.

**Land Use Planning** - This is the plans of how land will be used. This includes where there will be new schools erected, or stores, landscaping done, etc. This can be done by residents of neighborhoods working together with city officials. In this case it will specifically refer to land use planning around LRT stations.

**Low Floor Trains** - These are train cars that are at the same level as the station platform so people don't have to step up onto train. They can just walk right onto it. This makes boarding easier for individuals with disabilities.

**Master Plan** - In this case a master plan is a plan that looks at many different issues within the LRT corridor at the same time. These include land use, development opportunities, transportation impacts, concerns about public lands. These issues are then looked at in relation to one another in a comprehensive way and a plan is made.

**Metropolitan Council (Met Council)** - This is the main communication line about LRT between agencies and citizens. Met Council is also in charge of getting communities involved in planning process. They also provide CAC with information and CAC provides feedback.

**Metro Transit** - Once Mn/DOT has completed construction and testing of LRT, Metro Transit will be the owner and operator

**Minneapolis Planning Department** - Is in charge of land use planning around stations. They have also worked together with MCDA and Hennepin County to make a plan for development because in order to receive funding from the FTA a city must have good plans for development patterns around the LRT.

**Park and Ride** - These are parking areas set up near certain station stops meant for people to park their cars so they can ride Light Rail Transit from there.

**Station Area Master Plan** - This is a master plan that is applied only to the area that is 1/2 mi. around the station stop instead of the entire corridor.

**Station Platform** - The ground under the station where people stand to wait for trains.

**Station Stop** - This is the station shelter that people wait under for the trains.

**Subsurface Station** - A station that is underground

**Transit Oriented Development** - This is a kind of land use planning that is specifically designed to promote use of public transit instead of cars.

**Urban Design** - The organization of land uses and places within a city/urban area. This includes the layout and design of buildings, and other places and how the setup affects people and makes them feel when they are there.

**Yards and Shops** - This is the storage area for Light Rail Vehicles where they will receive maintenance, and be washed. This is also where the control facility will be. The final assembly of vehicles will also take place here.

**Zoning** - Laws that say how land can be used. These laws say that some areas can only be used for residential property, only commercial uses, or only industrial uses, etc.

## Acronyms

**CAC** Community Advisory Committee - This body was mandated by the state legislature. It is made up of community representatives along the corridor including residents, and business representatives, who are appointed by the Minneapolis City Council to address community concerns and build more public participation. At meetings CAC is presented with information from Met Council and its members provide feedback based on a community perspective. Members of this committee also advise and give recommendations to the CMC. Each CAC representative is designated to a specific neighborhood.

**CMC** Corridor Management Committee - This body was mandated by the state legislature. It is made up of elected officials from Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Met Council, Mn/DOT, Metro Transit who were appointed by the various agencies involved in planning LRT. This body resolves issues about whether or not things are possible. It manages the project.

**D/B** Design and Build project - A project in which there is only one proposal for consultant teams to do instead of separating final design from construction. This way pieces of construction can be done once the plans for those pieces is done. This makes the whole process go faster because they don't have to wait for the completion of all the plans before they start construction. They can plan for the next section while they are constructing the one before it.

**EA** Environmental Assessment - A document based on a study of how the project will effect the environment.

**EIS** Environmental Impact Statement- This is done for any major development project that may greatly change the environment. It includes an in-depth analysis of social and economic influences as well as the effects that the project may have on the environment. An EIS also looks at alternative ways to do the project. It is much more in depth than the EA.

**FFGA** Full Funding Agreement - If approved by the FTA, this agreement would mean that the FTA pays for half of the cost of the LRT project. The decision on this should be made by June 2000.

**FTA** Federal Transit Administration - This agency will supply the funding for half of all costs of the LRT project with the FFGA if they approve the request that has been made.

**HCRRA** Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority - Originally in charge of planning for LRT in the 1980's. They purchased property along corridors and were instrumental in getting the project moving. Now, Mn/SOT is in charge of final

construction so HCRRA plays a secondary role. It is just one of several agencies making the decisions. It owns property for future transportation line.

**LRT** Light Rail Transit - The Light Rail Transit is a passenger train that runs along continuously welded tracks. It is powered by an overhead electrical system.

**LRV** Light Rail Vehicle - An individual train which has two cars

**MAC** Metropolitan Airports Commission - This agency is responsible for building the tunnel and the stations at the airport.

**MCDA** Minneapolis Community Development Association - Helps with land use planning around the corridor. In order to receive funding from the FTA a city must have good plans for development patterns around the LRT. The MCDA works together with Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Planning Department to make such a plan.

**Mn/DOT** Minnesota Department of Transportation - In charge of design and construction of LRT system.

**PCB** Project Control Board - This agency is made up of one representative from Met Council, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Hennepin County, MAC, and HCRRA. The board makes recommendations on all technical and policy matters to CMC and the Commissioner. It also makes daily decisions make to direct staff so that they can proceed on the project.

**PCC** Project Coordinating Committee - This agency has been dissolved because it was not very effective. It's duties have been taken over by the PCB.

**PDP** Preliminary Design Plans - This is one part of the PE that concerns the alignment of the route and the stations.

**PE** Preliminary Engineering - The beginning plans for construction designed up to a level where the design builder takes over to design the rest. It includes environmental as well as financial aspects of construction. It has already been completed and given to the FTA.

**RFP** Request For Proposal - A two phase process for design and build. The first phase is asking potential candidates for designing LRT for their qualifications. The candidates are narrowed down to 2-5 firms who are then asked develop a proposal for it and estimate costs. Then the designer is chosen.

**R/W** Right of Way - Area around rail tracks that needs to be purchased in order for the project to start.



TAAC Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee - This committee was also mandated by the state legislature. It reviews information and comments on transit for people who are disabled, elderly, or others for whom accessibility might be a problem.

## Introduction to Land Use Planning

Land use planning consists of the plans made for how land in a particular area will be used. It is an important tool for people who want to have an impact on their surroundings. It allows residents to design their communities in ways that suit their needs and desires. With the Light Rail Transit coming into the neighborhood, the opportunities arise for greatly reshaping and developing the communities around it. Neighborhood residents can and should be involved in this process. When neighborhood residents are involved in planning, their commitment to their neighborhood is greater. Below is a very brief introduction to land use planning.

One of the most important factors in neighborhood planning is democratic participation. This means that as many citizens as possible should be involved in creating the plan. The more people that are involved, the more representative of the resident's desires the plan is likely to be. It may also be quite useful to work with a professional planner who has a lot of specific knowledge about the processes involved, and what is possible, and what is not.

In beginning to create the plan, a lot of information must first be collected about physical and social aspects of the neighborhood. This can be done through a lot of direct observation of the neighborhood, interviews with residents, and data from the local government. Once a lot of information is collected, different issues can be identified. People can decide what problems exist, what things can be made better, etc. Then, decisions can be made as to what to do about the problems.

Next, goals should be set to deal with these issues. Following this step should be coming up with strategies, and specific actions that need to be made to achieve the goals.

Once the plan is completed, it should be distributed to the neighborhood to make sure the people are really behind it. Finally, when presenting to the city, it is more likely to get implemented if it is written very specifically and precisely, if people responsible for each action are identified, and also if cost estimates, and possible funding sources are listed.

Although not all plans that neighborhoods come up with actually get implemented, it is important to try. Even if the whole plan does not actually get used, city planners and officials will at least get an idea of what residents want and may use some of the suggestions that are given in the plan. For more detailed information on neighborhood planning one helpful resource may be, neighborhood planning: A guide for citizens and planners by Bernie Jones. Another resource would be your neighborhood association.

The method of neighborhood planning described here, however, is not the only one. It is one that involves mostly residents with only slight influence from city government. The Minneapolis Light Rail Transit project will be somewhat different. The Minneapolis city government, in this case, is heavily involved in land use planning. However, this does not mean that citizens have no influence over the process. The city planning office, working together with several other agencies and consultants, is holding several workshops with neighborhood residents to get their input on how land along the LRT route should be used. Workshops will be held for each neighborhood that LRT stops in to give input on the design for the area around the station. At the workshops, residents will be introduced to the concept of transit oriented development. Then, in small groups, they will be given a large map of the area around the station and asked to come up with a plan for how they would like it to look. Residents can add create grassy areas, more stores, housing, or whatever they feel would be best for the area. The hired planning consultants will then take this information into consideration when making the final plans.

All residents of neighborhoods near the LRT route are encouraged to attend the planning workshops. For information about when and where these workshops will take place, please contact your neighborhood group or Jennifer Lovaasen.

## Land Use Planning Terms

**Physical aspects-** These are characteristics of the neighborhood that can be identified just by looking at them. These would include where there are parks, where houses are run down, where there are vacant lots, etc.

**Social aspects-** These are not physical characteristics of the neighborhood but rather the way people feel about the neighborhood. This includes peoples opinions on the quality of life, how safe they feel, or how visually attractive they find the neighborhood.

**Direct observation-** This is simply looking around and seeing what's there.

**Subarea planning-** plans for areas that smaller than the entire city, such as a neighborhood

**SWOT analysis-** This is an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This means considering all these factors when deciding what issue to work on in the plan. This includes finding out what forces and events are occurring outside the community that might affect the neighborhood.

**Existing land uses-** the locations and dimensions of different types of land use in the area. This includes residential land use, industrial land use, commercial land use, etc.

**Zoning-** This is legal restrictions on what type of property can be in specific areas. For example, some areas are zoned residential so only houses or duplexes, or apartments can be on this property.

**Demographics-** These are population characteristics such as race, age, gender, number of persons per housing unit, etc.

**PARK-** Preserve, Add, Remove, Keep out. This a method for identifying issues in the community. People should decide what things they want to preserve, add, remove, or keep out.

## **Transit Oriented Development**

Transit Oriented Development is a kind of land use planning that is specifically designed to promote the use of public transit instead of cars. There are three main components to this type of land use that make it especially effective for supporting the use of transit.

### **High density or compact development:**

The intensity of development around station stops must be transit-supportive. This means having lots of residents and workers within walking distance of public transit so that they will be likely to use it. Studies have shown that comfortable walking distance for most people is about 1/4 of a mile, a five minute walk. People are more likely to use transit if it is within this comfortable walking distance of where they live, work or shop. So this high density compact development should be made within 1/4 mile around stations. Any further than that and people may start using cars instead.

### **Mixed uses in the TOD core:**

Have diverse activity uses like retail, professional services, housing, civic amenities like libraries and post offices, small offices, restaurants, community centers, day care, and employment in the TOD area. This allows residents and workers/employees to run errands on foot, without a car. It also allows people to use transit to come into the area and run several errands in the same trip instead of driving around to isolated individual stores. This makes station stops multi-purpose destinations, and makes many things easily accessible by transit.

### **Pedestrian oriented design:**

This kind of design is very important to making TOD work as it should. Since all transit riders become pedestrians when they leave LRT or the bus and walk to their destination, areas around stations should support pedestrian travel. This includes placing buildings close to the street so that their entrances face the street, while their parking is behind them out of sight. This makes it easier to walk up to the stores rather than driving. Pedestrian oriented design also includes making the area visually attractive through landscaping, tree-lined streets, and large public spaces immediately around the transit stops. This makes the area appealing to walk through. There should also be a network of streets around the TOD 1/4 mi. core that is very interconnected so that it is easy for people to get from outside the TOD core of high density mixed used development, into the core or to a transit stop.



## **Contact Names**

Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Commissioner.....(612) 348-7884

### **For general questions about LRT contact:**

Jennifer Lovaasen, Met Council.....(651) 602-1493

Mary McFarland, Mn/DOT.....(651) 582-1252

### **For questions concerning land use planning and zoning contact:**

Monique MacKenzie, Mpls. Planning Office.....(612) 673-2595

### **For questions concerning transit contact:**

John Dillery, Metro Transit.....(612) 349-7773

### **For questions concerning LRT design and planning contact:**

Gary Erickson, Hennepin County.....(612) 348-4182

## **Neighborhood Organizations**

Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.....(612) 335-5846

Phillips Environment and Transportation Committee.....(612) 872-6144

Seward Neighborhood Group.....(612) 338-6205

Corcoran Neighborhood Group.....(612) 724-7457

Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association (SENA).....(612) 721-1601

Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA).....(612) 724-5652

Longfellow Community Council (LCC).....(612) 722-4529

## **CAC Members**

Share your comments on any aspects of LRT planning with your neighborhood representatives.

Paul Barber, Downtown Mpls.....(612) 375-9181 e-mail: pbarber@isd.net

Margot Imdieke Cross, Cedar Riverside....(612) 288-0120

Tom Daniel, Standish Ericsson.....(612) 721-1601 e-mail: tdaniel@hhh.umn.edu

Jim Davnie, Seward.....(612) 724-5163 e-mail: davn001@tc.umn.edu

Michael Guest, Powderhorn.....(612) 724-9454 e-mail msguest@bitstram.net

James Nestingen, Longfellow.....(612) 724-1300 email: nestingen@wavetech.net

Michael O'Neal, Phillips.....(612) 330-1095 e-mail: oneal@augsborg.edu

Millie Schafer, Elliot Park.....(612) 338-5125  
Dave Schmidt, Nokomis East.....e-mail: dschmidt@msn.com  
Julionne Glad, Corcoran.....(612) 724-7457  
Marcy Tollefson, Standish Ericsson.....e-mail: marcytol@juno.com

**Members of the City Council**

Paul Ostrow, Ward 1.....(612) 673-2201  
Joan Campbell, Ward 2.....(612) 673-2202  
Joe Biernat, Ward 3.....(612) 673-2203  
Barbara Johnson, Ward 4.....(612) 673-2204  
Jacki Cherryholmes, Ward 5.....(612) 673-2205  
Jim Niland, Ward 6.....(612) 673-2206  
Lisa Goodman, Ward 7.....(612) 673-2207  
Brian Herron, Ward 8.....(612) 673-2208  
Kathy Thurber, Ward 9.....(612) 673-2209  
Lisa McDonald, Ward 10.....(612) 673-2210  
Dore Mead, Ward 11.....(612) 673-2211  
Sandy Colvin Roy, Ward 12.....(612) 673-2212  
Barret Lane, Ward 13.....(612) 673-2213





This is what the Light Rail Vehicles will look like. Above the train are electrical powerlines used to power the train. Note that the tracks are not very disruptive to the atmosphere of the area. Pedestrians walk freely over the tracks.



This is a station stop. Trees and plants are used to help the station stop fit into its surroundings. Note the high density housing in the background near the stop.

Pictures provided by Sishir Chang, Research Fellow at the University of Minnesota

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